



Gunagrāhi

H. Varnanathan

Karnataka's only English International Journal on Music and Dance

Vol. 1 Issue - 1

June 1998

Price : Rs. 8/-

10th Birth Day Tribute



Cover Story :

Guru Maya Rao
Varijashri



The Child Genius

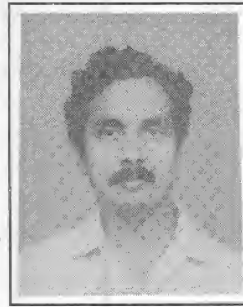
GUNAGRAHI FAMILY



Dr. M. Surya Prasad



Usha Kamath



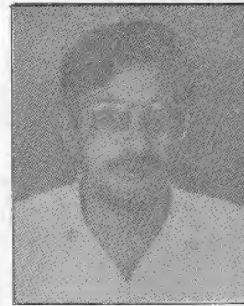
K. Ramamurthy Rao



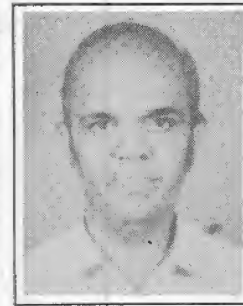
B. L. Manjula



Balakrishna



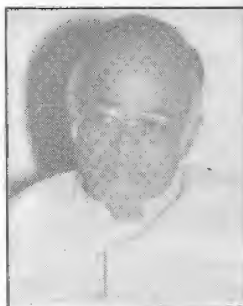
*S. K. Lakshminarayana
(Babu)*



V. Krishnan



Dr. A. H. Rama Rao



M. Bharadwaj



H. K. Ganesh



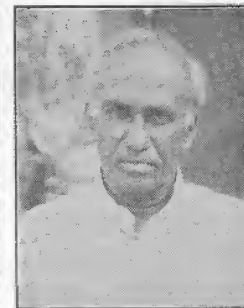
B. V. K. Shastry



E. R. Sethuram



*Pandit Seshadri
Gavayi*



*Prof. M. S. Nanjunda
Rao*



*Dr. H. N. Shiva
Prakash*



*Pandit Parameswara
Hegde*

(To be Continued in the Next Issue)

Editor General
Dr. M. Surya Prasad

Phone : 2253975

Associate Editors :
Usha Kamath, Ph. 5598886

K. Ramamurthy Rao

Mysore. Ph. 0821-481899

B.L. Manjula, Ph : 6619227

Printer :
Balakrishna, Ph: 6679333

Chief Patrons :
S. K. Lakshminarayana (Babu)

Mysore. Ph : 0821-513414

V. Krishnan, Ph : 3345665

Dr. A.H. Ramarao, Ph : 6691175

M. Bharadwaj, Ph : 08182-22051

H. K. Ganesh, Ph : 645359

Principal Advisers:
B.V.K. Sastry, Ph : 3342682

E.R. Sethuram, Ph : 603116

Dr. R. Sathyanarayana

Mysore. 0821-529599

T.S. Parthasarathy

Chennai, 022-459005

Pandit Seshadri Gayayi

Ph : 626371

Guru Maya Rao, Ph : 2283486

Mattur Krishnamurthy,

Ph: 3346404

Guru Lalitha Srinivasan

Ph : 3348275

Prof. M.S. Nanjunda Rao

Ph : 2261816

Shyamala Bhawe, Ph. 3443900

Administrative Executive
Dr. H.N. Shivaprakash, Ph : 6672189

Advisory Council
Durga.C.Avarthi
T.A.S.Mani, Ph. 344155

Guru H.R. Keshavamurthy
Pandit Gowrang Kodical

Ph. 3316325

H.N. Suresh, Ph: 3347918

Pandit Parameshwara Hegde

Ph. 3310039

Pandit Vinayaka Torvi, Ph : 3305701

Col. G.S. Subbarao (retd.)

Ph: 6631286

Dr. T.S. Vaidyeshwar, Ph: 6631286

Prof. K.E. Radhakrishna

Ph: 3321651

C. Cheluvraj, Ph: 3328361

Dr. Vasundara Doreswamy

Ph: 0821-542814

T.R. Harish, Ph: 0821-510407

Guru Padmini Rao, Ph. 6670013

Lochana Ajay Kumar
Vol.1 Issue 1 June 1998

Inside

| | |
|--|----|
| The Rising Stars | 2 |
| From Editorial Desk | 3 |
| Varijashri.....A genius of music by birth Karnatik classical music in | 4 |
| Karnataka world then and now | 6 |
| Maya Rao.....the Queen of Kathak | 9 |
| Reviews | 13 |
| Cassette Review | 15 |
| Quiz of Fine Arts and Calendar of events | 16 |

This issue is Co-sponsored by : T. D. Rajendra and Nirupama

Correspondents
INLAND : Bangalore-Ananthapadmanabha Rao

Ph: 5532658 Mysore-Keshav and K. Raghavendra Rao

Ph: 0821513517 Shimoga-Srikanthaiah. Hubli-Dharwar-

Jayasree Guttal-Ph: 0836347532 Hassan-N. Raghu

Ph:0817250466.

Bombay-B. Nagabhushan Ph. 0251-472475 and V.R. Karnad

Ph: 044-4308102 New Delhi-Prakash Wadehara

FOREIGN : Singapore- Girish Panicker, Ph. 65-2992352

Wellington - Vivek Kinra, Ph. 54-4-3873888 San Fransisco

Mythili Krishna, Ph. 408-7256845: 408-7252951

*We welcome all unsolicited material but do not take responsibility for the same. If these are to be returned, postage should be included.

* Letters are welcome but are subject to editing.

* All rights reserved. Nothing may be printed in whole or in part without the written permission of the publisher.

*The editors and publisher of *Gunagrahi* do their best to verify the information published but do not take responsibility for the absolute accuracy of the information. The opinions/views expressed by individual authors in articles published are not necessarily those of *Gunagrahi*.

EDITORIAL OFFICE :

**"MUNIKOTI", NO. 8, SECOND CROSS,
OPP. SRINIVASA MANDIRAM, BALEPET,
BANGALORE - 560 053. PH : 2253975**

THE RISING STARS



L. BALASUBRAMANYA SHARMA
(VOCALIST)

28-year old Balasubramanya Sharma hails from a cultural and traditional family of Kaivara in Kolar district. His father Kaipu Lakshminarasimha Sastry is a reputed musician and also a scholar. Sharma received his initial training from his father. Later on he continued his pursuit of music with noted violinist S. Seshagirirao of Akashwani, Bangalore. At present he is being trained by veteran vidwan P. Sundaresan.

A science graduate of Bangalore University, Sharma has determined to settled down as a professional musician. He has secured first class in vidwath (vocal) examination conducted by the Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board. He has also passed the senior examination in mridanga in first class.

With hardwork and dedication to the art, Sharma has assimilated a rich and varied repertoire of krithis. He has been recognised by Akaswani, Bangalore as a "B" grade artiste. Sharma has to his credit prestigious sabha and public performances and four audio cassettes.

No. 809, 25th Cross, 52nd main, Kumarswamy Lay out I stage, B - 73, Phone: 091-80-6663248.



A.P. SARVOTHAMA
(FLAUTIST)

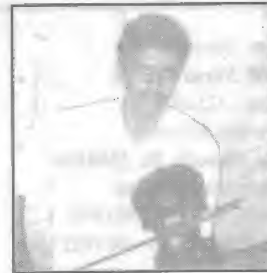
Born on 26th April 1973, Sarvothama was exposed to music right from his early age. Veteran flutist M.S.Srinivasamurthy gave him the initial training. He had his advanced training under the guidance of M.R.Doraswamy. Along with training in music he also obtained his B.Sc. degree (electronics).

Sarvothama successfully passed his senior music examination with a first class. Karnataka Sangeetha Nrithya Academy recognised his budding talents by awarding him a scholarship for three years. This young flutist has won first prizes in the AIR instrumental music competitions (1993) and South Central Zone Cultural Centre's national level competitions (1994).

A "B" grade artiste of AIR, Sarvothama was adjudged as the "Best Instrumentalist" in the junior concert competitions conducted by the Bangalore Gayana Samaja.

Sarvothama has performed in various Sabhas of Bangalore and other cities.

No.42, "Bhakti Nilaya", K.R.Road, Basavangudi, B - 4, Phone: 6601114.



R. RAGHURAM
(VIOLINIST)

26-year old R. Raghuram is a popular violinist in the Karnatik music field. He has passed his M.A. from Bangalore University with distinction by getting a rank. At present he is doing his M. Phil.

Right from the age of 10, he started learning violin under the guidance of Ulsoor S.Chandrasekhar. Seasoned singer T. S. Vasantha Madhavi gave him useful training in vocal music.

Raghuram got trained in the intricacies of the violin play under the guidance of Late Anoor S. Ramakrishna. With his inborn talents and hardwork and also the knowledge of vocal music he could emerged both as an able soloist and an accompanist.

He has won many prizes in various competitions. A good number of scholarships has also been pocketed by him. He has utilised the opportunities of accompanying different artistes on different stages to his best advantage by winning accolades. He has to his credit many solo performances.

No.528, 14th cross, 27th main road, J.P.Nagar I phase, B - 78.

From Editorial Desk



Despite many unique features, Karnataka, the Land of Kaveri, the Land of coffee and the only State wherein one can see the parallel growth of both Karnatik and Hindusthani music, it has been deprived of its due recognition, both within and outside the Country. We have highly talented, matured and versatile musicians, dancers and actors. Their mastery over their art and craft is of high standard. In fact, there is nothing left in wanting. Perhaps, the only thing missing is their PR skill.

With our politician-leaders evincing less interest in the promotion of our artistes and varied art forms of our State, the state of affairs is very tragic. Our talent and expertise are languishing in the absence of exposure and promotion. The impresario-work has never been rewarding or encouraging. It is hightime, a powerful communication is established, a fruitful link between our artistes and the outside agencies is provided.

Having closely moved with the field of music and dance for the last 20 years, I strongly felt the need of a strong medium, through which the loopholes could be plugged. To commemorate the completion of two decades of my association with the twin fields, I thought of doing this little service. My good friends agreed to join hands with me. The result is now in your hand.

"Gunagrahi" is the only English Journal with a global approach on music and dance to be published from Karnataka. This will be the mouthpiece of our artistes and art forms. Through this monthly magazine every effort will be made to expose artistic talents both within and outside the country. Opportunities of interactions at the national and international level will be created. We intend to help, encourage and assist artistes of Karnataka, in particular, to prosper and get their due, either be it performances or awards.

In this direction, we solicit the co-operation of one and all who is interested in the healthier growth of artistes and art forms. We seek your inspiration to do our best. *Gunagrahi* is your magazine of today, with an eye on tomorrow. Enjoy reading it and contribute in your way to its ENRICHMENT.

Your's

VARIJASHRI.....

.....A genius of music by birth

[At the milk-tooth-age, she could identify more than hundred ragas!. Her musical instinct became sharper. At four, she could sing the compositions of the Trinity with stunning ease. Her musical aptitude found new dimensions. Singing exacting pallavis in different talas and nadais was literally a "child's play" for her. "Without doubt, she is a genius of music by birth." opines Dr. M. Surya Prasad.]

It was a big event. The Bangalore Gayana Samaja auditorium was full to the brim. Every available space both on and off the stage overflowed with the avid and curious listeners. The centre of attraction was a seven-year old child prodigy Varijashri. Her musical wizardry was incredible. The full-fledged concert given by her was remarkably successful.

Varijashri's vocal recital held under the auspices of Narthana Keerthana Centre for Performing Centre was a grand success. Despite three or four captivating concerts elsewhere, the rasikas had thronged the Samaja hall to hear to Varijashri. And the tiny tot tantalized them with her amazing talent and skill. She held the audience spellbound for more than 120

minutes. Be it alapana and/or sahitya and swaraprastara, Varijashri's musical-resourcefulness was astonishing.



Varijashri "backed" by her parents

age, she could identify more than hundred ragas! Her musical instinct became more sharper. At four, she could sing the compositions of Thyagaraja, Shyama Sastry and Muthuswamy

Dikshitar with stunning ease. It did not stop at that. As she grew in age, her musical aptitude found new dimensions. The five year girl Varijashri surprised the listeners by singing exacting pallavis in different talas

and nadais. The wonder-child proved that she is a genius by birth having more within herself than acquiring something.

Observing this, Venugopal nurtured it further. Varijashri was put under the meticulous training of a meritted vocalist H. Geetha which helped in honing up her talent.

SHARP MUSICAL INSTINCT

Born to popular flautist-bank officer H.S.Venugopal and Rama Venugopal, Varijashri's musical aptitude got exposed when she was just 2 year old. Not only her parents but whoever saw the two and a half year child Varijashri did cross their fingers. At that milk-tooth-

Her musical knowledge is not a shallow one. I myself grilled her at her residence for more than two hours quizzing her about various ragas, keerthanas etc. She was always right in identifying the name of the raga, its janaka-janya status, the correct number of the janaka raga and so on. She was at home in solving my riddles of replacing one swara in a particular raga with some other and giving the correct name of the thus-changed-raga. Her command over more than hundred ragas was marvelous.

GRAND MAIDEN CONCERT

Her maiden concert brought to the fore her depth of knowledge. Varijashri sang with rare confidence and conviction. She began with the popular Mohana varna. She was applauded for her very first item rendered with ease and poise. Then came Hamsadhwani. Vyasaraaja's "Gajamukhane" was a fine choice. Intoning perfectly without distorting the Sahitya, the prodigy projected her rhythmic hold too.

The detailed treatment meted out to Kamavardhini for Thyagaraja's "Shiva Shiva enaraada" startled the audience.

Varijashri's methodical approach and spontaneity of musical ideas not only made the raga glow in all its grandeur but also provided a feast of tasty music. Thyagaraja's Sri raga pancharathna krithi "Endarō Mahanbhavulu," was accorded its due. The way she sang the swaras and the sahiya of the krithi was enticing. She sang all the



Twinkling Little Star

songs by heart. No reference book or chits were there. Her memory power was phenomenal.

BRILLIANT PALLAVI

She swept the audience off their feet by rendering a scholarly raga, tana and pallavi in Mohana. Tana was comparatively short. The pallavi line "Shankari Shivashankari sada paahi Parameshwari" set to two kalai khanda triputa tala

testified to her brilliance. Though little more depth and direction was left wanting, Varijashri impressed the rasikas by rendering the pallavi in the most traditional way. The 3-5-7-9 patterns of swaras, manipulation of the sahiya in trishra, interesting korvais etc made for the rich musical experience.

The concluding phase of her recital featuring Vasantha (Ramachandra), Sindhubhairavi (Venkatachala Nilayam) and Brindavani (Tillana) highlighted one or the other speciality of a 66 great-vocalist-in-the-making Varijashri.

It would be good for her parents to safeguard this musical-bud with care. She should not be overexposed for any temptation of purse and popularity. I wish she is guided more immaculately on the subtleties of gamaka prayoga, the soul of Karnatik music. R. Raghuram's violin support was adequate. Gurumurthy and Srishyla on mridanga and ghata inspired the child-vocalist to give out her best. ♦

Special Article

Mysore has been the cultural capital of Karnataka right from the days of Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar, a period covering more than one and a half century. The rulers of Mysore were great patrons of music, dance, painting, sculpture and literature, apart from an aesthetic approach to all that is good in life. Musicians, dancers, vaggeyakaras, sculptors, scholars, literary figures, artists, actors, architects adorned the court.

The rules were themselves great connoisseurs of classical and western classical music also. Some of them were adept in playing various musical instruments. The last Maharaja, Sri Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar was well up in Karnatik music and had also acquired the Diploma in Piano play from the Trinity School of Music, London. He was also a *uttama vaggeyakara*. More than 90 scholarly *krithis* in Sanskrit and in various rare ragas are to his credit.

KARNATIK CLASSICAL MUSIC**IN KARNATAKA THEN AND NOW**

- K. Raghavendra Rao

The musical ambience in the court had its effect on the citizenry also. young girls were compulsorily learning music. This found expression in the opening of Prasanna Seetharama Mandira in 1929 by the legendary Bidaram Krishnappa, who started the 10 day Sree Ramanavami festival of Karnatika classical music concerts by inviting famous *vidwans* from all over the South. This lead was taken up by various other *sabhas* and by the time of Independence there were about a dozen *sabhas*, which were holding concerts during Sree Rama Navami. This was a great boon to those music lovers who had no entry to the Dasara concerts in the Palace and specially to the students of music.

Similarly Bangalore had Gayana Samaja and Sri Rama Seva Mandali many distance town were also conducting Rama Navami festivals.

If we go back by 50 years to 1947, we find that the living legend M. S. Subbulukshmi,

then 31 years old, was already an established artiste. D. K. Pattammal, then 28, was a star. M. L. Vasanthakumari had started making *wavas*. G. N. B. 37 year old, had become a trend-setter with his new style of *pace* laced with *birkhas*. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, 39 years old, was a top-ranker. Similarly, Alathur Bros. Chembai and Madurai Mani were front-rankers. T. R. Mahalingam, then 21, had already been hailed as a genius. The *mridanga* maestro Palghat Mani was 35.

The scene in Mysore was also impressive. Mysore Vasudevacharya was heading the fold. Thitte Krishna Iyengar was then 45 year old (he passed away) last year at the age of 94. He was active till the end and used to give concerts. Mysore T. Chowdiah was the monarch of the violin. Vainikas R.S. Keshava Murthy, Swaramurti V. N. Rao were in their 40's. R.K. Venkatarama Shastri, the

violinist, Vainikaa Neelamma Kadambi, V. Ramarathnam, B. Devendrappa, Shelvapulla Iyengar, Honnappa Bhagavathar, R.K. Narayanaswamy (elder brother of R.K. Srikantan), R. Chandrashekharaiiah eldest of Mysore Brothers, R. R. Keshava Murthy were in their 30's and had already established themselves.

Vainikas V. Doreswamy Iyengar (who passed away last year), R.N. Doreswamy, M. J. Srinivasa Iyengar, N. C. h o k k a m m a , V.Deshikachar, Vocalists, B. Krishnappa, R.K. Srikantan were in their 20s. Vyyapuri Devaru had trained many mridanga players who were active in the field.

The oft-heard refrain amongst the aficionados of Karnatik music is that other media of entertainment like the television and videos have taken over and classical music is on the decline now. But the ground conditions are quite to the contrary.

The major quantitative change that has come about during these fifty years is a sort of democratisation of classical music. While the Dasara and Ugadi festival concerts are continuing in the Palace, the number of

sabhas has proliferated, the latest count being forty. Some are active during Sri Rama Navami festival, some during Hanuma Jayanthi, Janmashtami and Ganesha festivals and some throughout the year. Observance of Sri Purandaradasa Aradhana and the days of Trimurtis of Karnatik music i.e. Thyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Shyama Shastri are conducted by many sabhas. There is, thus, music alround the year with fairly good attendance. The concerts mostly have no entry fees and are sponsored by various corporate and private bodies and donations.

Consequently, the number of auditoria have also gone up with modern seating arrangements and sound systems. The number of teachers, students and institutions have also multiplied. though the gurukula system has disappeared.

The University of Mysore established a Fine Arts College in 1965 which trains students upto Master's Degree in music. Many alumini of this Institute have won national fame. Some like

Mysore M. Nagaraj and Dr. Mysore M. Manjunath, Violinists and vocalists Sukanya Prabhakar and Janhavi Jayaprakash are internationally famous.

Vocalist R.N. Srilatha, who was the first to obtain a Doctoral Degree in Karnatik music from Mysore University is on the faculty of this college. Many publications on music, including krithis of Haridasas and Mysore composers have been published with notations by Prasaraanga of Mysore University. Many audio-cassetes of Karnatik music have come into the market.

There are quite a number of young performers now - vocal and instrumental, with ladies leading by number amongst vocalists. (I have not listed them here as it will be a fairly long list).

But, how does one define youth in the realm of performing arts? Many feel that an artist is young as long as the fount of creativity is active in him. Going by the output of the vaggeyakaras of this century, most of them were late-bloomers. C.

Northcote Parkinson, the famous economist and management guru of the 50s and 60s, defined thirty-five as the age of frustration.

This probably has a basis in the Christian world where people sub-consciously tend to compare their achievements with those of Jesus Christ who died at the young age of 33. Hence, in Parkinson's system if you are not somebody in society in any walk of life by thirty five, you tend to resign yourself to mediocrity.

Again, this was at a time when 55 was considered as the age of superannuation in public services. Since then, the average longevity has definitely gone up due to various factors like improved health services, nutrition, etc. The retirement age having been enhanced to 58 and with talks of raising it further to 60, the age of frustration also gets extended to 38 consequently. In the Indian context, this corresponds to the life span of an achiever like Swami Vivekananda who lived upto 39 years. However arbitrary this reckoning of 38 years as the upper limit of youth, one gratifying statistic which emerges is that there is not dearth of young

musicians in Mysore. The future of classical music is safe in the hands of the youth who will carry its torch forward to the 21st century.

A survey made of young musicians in various disciplines - vocal and instrumental, who are already active in the performance circuits reveals certain characteristics vis-a-vis the musicians at the time of Independence.

Most of them are well educated. In some cases, graduation in technical disciplines such as engineering or medicine and post-graduation are also seen. Some are chartered accountants. Some are doctoral degree holders.

Remuneration to Karnatik musicians continue to be poor, specially when compared to their Hindusthani counterparts. Some Sabhas even make a virtue of being 'poor'. Artists earning extra through recordings are confined only to cities like Bangalore which have recording facilities. Most of the young musicians have some job or the other and very few depend on music alone for their means of livelihood.

The Western system of talent Scouts, impresarios and agents is virtually absent

in Karnatik music field. The Sabhanayakas are called upon to be three-in-ones. This results in imbalances and frustrations. All India Radio and teaching institutions are prominent means of employment. Employment does however restrict the mobility of artists to quite some extent and thus they get confined to certain regions, instead of going national or international. This compromise deprives them of fame and name and higher earnings. (to be continued in the next issue).

THE FORTHCOMING ISSUE OF GUNAGRAHI CARRIES:

- ◆ More number of pages
- ◆ An exclusive feature on the unique "Naada Mantapa" built by H.H. Sri Ganapati Sachchidananda Swamiji at his Sri Datta Ashrama, Mysore.
- ◆ Introducing other child prodigies.
- ◆ Report of the launching ceremony of *Gunagrahi*.
- ◆ Music and dance programme reviews.
- ◆ Other regular features.

Maya Rao

----- The Queen of Kathak -----

Guru Maya Rao recently turned 70. She has also completed her five decades of classical dance-choreography-teaching career. As a birthday gift to her, one of her most popular choreographic work 'vision of Amir Khusro' was presented at Ravindra Kalakshetra by her students. Gunagrahi chronologises her career and throws light on her versatile personality, ingenious work and remarkable achievements.

The renowned dancer-choreographer-Guru Maya Rao believes a person dances in a certain way because there is an innate compulsion to express one's creative impulse through that medium.

Kathak and choreography are second nature to her. She has internalised their aesthetics.

Maya, at 14, made up her mind to master Kathak, a dance which prevailed in North India. She did not care for the opposition from her parents and rose to become a leading name in the field of Kathak and Choreography.

Born in 1928, Maya was somewhat disappointed when Pandit Sohanlal, the only one teacher who was teaching Kathak in Bangalore shifted over to Bombay. Fortunately and lovingly too she found a lecturer's job in Jaipur. She continued her Kathak learning along with her job.

She had the rare opportunity of specialising Kathak under the two Gurus Padma Sri Shambhu Maharaj of Lucknow and Pandit Sundar Prasad of Jaipur style. Maya could synthesise the best elements of both the styles and created her own style of

Kathak. She was doubly-blessed to perform along with her Guru Shambhu Maharaj. She



The visionary

utilised this rare opportunity in the best way and became the only disciple of Maharajji to accompany the Guru.

She does not dismiss the relevance of other forms of dance, be it classical or contemporary. But relevance "must come within. If you have the conviction in what you are doing you will be able to convey that joy to your audience" says she.

For Maya Rao, whose performances have mesmerised audiences worldwide, this conviction is deep rooted. Contrary to what most dancers embracing contemporary forms argue, Maya has never

found traditional modes stifling. There is enough scope for innovation within the frame work. Most of this flexibility in approach she attributes to her teachers who had taught her "to be her own dancer". On the foundation they provided, Maya constructed her own ideas about the use of space, abhinaya, choreography and the content of dance. She does not believe in "fractured choreography" and interpolations.

Maya Rao argues that "The greatness of the Natya Sastra and of our classical styles is that they have given dancers infinite freedom to express their individual and personal enjoyment of dance movements." For her, every movement has a "feel" of its own, which is to be savoured differently.

According to her, why the classical dance appears to be mediocre and boring is because aptitude, proficiency and dedication have become superfluous in a world of quick fix solutions, of instant mixes. In today's show biz it is the glamour and the packaging which count. The integrity of the gurus, parents and students is essential to tide over this situation. She believes in the collective responsibility of the

dance community. Dancers have to reach out to people. "talk less in jargons".

The torch - bearer of Shambhu Maharaj's tradition, Maya has got rid the Kathak of its crudities. With a meaningful blend of Lucknow and Jaipur Gharana techniques, she put grace and liquidity into the art of Kathak. With her bold and brilliant experimentations, Maya became a distinguished and a versatile Choreographer. She has won for herself an enviable place in the hierarchy of the

Internationally reputed, Maya Rao is the only Indian with a post-graduate certificate in Choreography from U.S.S.R. on their scholarship for which she was nominated by the Government of India.

AWARDS

For her yeoman service to dance and choreography. Maya Rao has the distinction of being honoured with the National Academy of Dance and Music, the Sangeet Natak Academy Award for Dance, "Nritya Vilas" title of Sur-Singer of Bombay and

Administration Sahitya Kala Parishad. She is also the Gold Medal holder for her solo dance at the International Festival-cum-competition of Art held in Helisinki in 1962. Recently she has been honoured with the CHOREOFEST AWARD at Delhi.

MAYA Rao is the only South Indian who has specialised in Kathak under the great Veterans, Padmashri, Shambhu Maharaj of Lucknow Gharana and Pandit Sunder Prasad of Jaipur Gharana, as the first scholarship holder of the Government of India. She has imbibed the best element of both the techniques and presented them in her enthralling solo recitals and ensembles of Kathak which have won praise all over the country and abroad.

Maya Rao has the unique honour of partnering her Guru Shambhu Maharaj on historic occasions like the inauguration of the First National Film Seminar and the UNESCO Seminar at Delhi.

For her rich contribution to the repertoire of Kathak and training of dancers, besides giving Lecture-Demonstrations and writing articles, the Sangeet Natak Akademy had nominated Maya Rao as a member of the Advisory Committee of its Kathak Kendra, a National Centre for this form.

As a Choreographer of outstanding merit, Maya Rao has been invited to U.S.S.R. twice as consultant-Choreographer for the Soviet Productions of the Ballets "Shakuntala" in 1963 and 1979. Maya Rao was invited to the International Ballet Competitions, as Guest of



Maya Rao in action

Kathak dance by systematising its repertoire to bring out all its aesthetic and artistic possibilities.

the much coveted Karnataka State Award for eminence in Kathak and Choreography, State Award of Delhi

Honour in 1969 and as a member of the Jury in 1981, both of which were held in Moscow. She has been invited to Germany and other European Countries to participate in Seminars on Ballet and Choreography.

As Founder-Director of the Natya Institute of Choreography, affiliated to UNESCO and the first and only Institute of its kind in India, probably in Asia also, Maya Rao has trained over two hundred aspirants for the diploma course, short term-condensed course as well as at workshops which have been organised by the several state Academies and Cultural Organisations in the Country. Most of the candidates trained by her are either dancers deputed on Central, State Government Scholarships or fellows of foundation Grants from U.S.A., Europe and Canada. Her disciples are prospering as performers of Choreographers in India and outside, many of them have been appointed by the I.C.C.R. as Dance-Directors in their Centres abroad.

Maya Rao was also the Choreographer-Director of the Natya Ballet Centre, the leading Institution for the propagation of Dance-Drama.

In the several years devoted to promotion and propagation of high standard ballets, Maya Rao has directed over 50 ballets, at

the Natya Institute, Delhi, some of the very popular ones being "Amir Khusro",



Moving Maya

"Hoysala Vaibhava", "Krishna Leela", "Surdas", "Venkateswara Vilasam", "Tulsi ke Ram" (Ramayana based on Tulsidas work).

Along with M.S. Natarajan, her husband, Maya Rao is responsible for starting the Natya Saraswati Centre of Dance & Music in Bangalore as early as 1945 which helped in the renaissance movement to inspire youngsters to study the arts. As early as the 40's, the centre presented contemporary ballets on "Art & Life", "Grow more food", etc., some of which were presented at the International Labour Organisation Conference at Mysore in 1949 winning encomiums.

Thus the centre was responsible for the ballet movement in the State and pioneered the cause of social themes in South India.

PROGRAMMES FOR I.C.C.R

Since 1970, Maya Rao has been invited by the I.C.C.R. (Organ of the External Affairs Ministry) and the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, to lead cultural delegations to Foreign Countries. She has led her troupe to Afganistan, Srilanka, Nepal and Male among neighbouring countries and to Europe, Egypt, South American Countries, Cuba ect., The troupe has received standing ovations for the colourful performances representing the rich cultural heritage of India.

In recent years I.C.C.R had invited Maya Rao to present performances at Maldives (1990) for the Indian Independence Day there, Also for the world famous International Dance Festival at Babylon in Iraq (1996). The troupe consisting of artistes from the N.I.K.C Bangalore has received high praise and invitations for repeat performances.

Maya Rao founded Natya Institute of Kathak and Choreography at Bangalore with the assistance of the Karnataka Government where talented aspirants to the art of both Kathak and Choreography are undergoing training. Here too, spectacular dance-dramas like "Vijayanagara Vibhava", "Mahavira", "Kanaka Dasa" etc., have been Choreographed and Staged on important occasions.

COURSES RECOGNISED

The Natya Institute has been accorded affiliation to the Bangalore University since 1992, thereby the Natya College is the first of its kind in the Country. Three batches have already graduated with flying colours.

In recognition of her services to the State and the Country, Maya Rao was nominated as the Chairman of the Karnataka State Sangeet Nritya Academy and also as Member of the General Council of Sangeet Natak Akademy, Delhi.

WORKSHOPS AND PROGRAMMES ABROAD:

In 1988, Maya Rao was invited to U.K. by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan to conduct workshops in

Kathak where many talented aspirants underwent training.

In 1992, Maya Rao was invited to Toronto, Canada by the Kathak Institute to participate in a seminar on Traditions and Innovation in Kathak and conduct workshops on the same theme.

In 1992, she was in New York to conduct workshops in Kathak for the East West School of Dance-U.S.A. directed by Sathyanarayan Charka.

Later she was invited to design the Choreography and Music of the production of "Shakuntala" at U.S.A. for the E.W. Dance Centre.

In 1994, Maya Rao with her disciples presented another spectacular ballet "Vikramaditya" in various

parts of U.S.A. for the ICDS (Indian Classical Dance Society) based in Washington.

In 1995, she choreographed "Mira" for Supriya Desai and her Institution based in North Carolina. This ballet also won encomiums.

In 1997, at the invitation of the Kannada Koota New York & Washington Maya Rao, with a troupe of six dancers presented programmes entitled "Glimpses of Karnataka".

Maya Rao, later travelled to various other parts of U.S.A. presenting the "Dances of India" in connection with the fifty years of Indian Independence organised by other agencies. ♦

ADVERTISE IN GUNAGRAHI AND BE BENEFITED

GUNAGRAHI, is a journal dedicated to the promotion of music and dance. It will focus attention on all aspects of the twin arts and the artistes who are involved in them.

Edited by an experienced team of writers on the subject, the journal is profusely illustrated. It is printed in the offset process with a multi-colour cover page.

Its pages carry information on the activities in the twin fields, write-ups on personalities, interviews with eminent artistes besides covering the several performances connected with the twin subjects, A note on books and review of cassettes is an additional attraction.

This journal helps our artistes to achieve excellence in their arts and get an international exposure. Hence it will be a 'must' for all artistes as well as those interested in them.

GUNAGRAHI is the right media as much for all music and dance schools as to individual artistes. It reaches a wide spectrum of aesthetes that matters. It is a privilege to carry advertisements relating to all such activities.

Please find out advertisement tariff. We are sure you will avail of this opportunity and extend your patronage for our mutual benefit.

Reviews

VISUAL IMAGERY

Dancers of the STEM dance theatre & the Natya Institute of Kathak & choreography performed at 'Bhoomika' on the 4th of June.

The performance



Madhu Nataraj (Left) and others

comprised of 2 vibrant sequences choreographed by the Kathak & contemporary dancer/choreographer and founder director of STEM - Madhu, M.Nataraj and a student of Maya Rao and Chitra Venugopal.

The sequence was an adaption of a sloka from the Abhinaya Darpana, attributing the 4 forms of expression to Lord Shiva. This piece named "Cosmic Dancer" utilised motifs of

Kathak, Kathakali, indigenous martial artforms and contemporary dance idioms to present a unique visual imagery. The music for this sequence was provided by Amit, a talented musician and composer, who is a graduate of the prestigious Berklee College of Music under the guidance of the Manis of the Karnataka College of Percussion.

The second sequence was a satire on the human psyche. The human being

The dancing was followed by a Jazz and fusion concert by the Amit Heri group. The group consisted of a talented lot of musicians of repute. Amit Heri (A constrict Electrigitar) Richard Francis (Bass guitar) Roberto Narayan (Drums) and Butto Patnaik (Hindustani Flute).

This evening termed as a studio performance was a true amalgam of both dance and music and was received very enthusiastically by the audience who had filled the hall beyond its capacity.

---SHRAVANI

SUBHASHINI ENTHRALLS

Samskrithi led by dancer Sathyanarayana Raju presented Subhashini Vasantha in neat Bharatanatya recital at ADA Rangamandira. Subhashini, a disciple of Guru Narmada, was making a comeback on the dance arena. It was good to see her maintaining a slim figure. She moved on the stage with agility and alacrity.

Ably supported by her Guru Narmada (nattuvanga), Jahnvi Jayaprakash (vocal), Madhusudhan (violin), Narayanaswamy (mridanga) and H.S.Venugopal (flute), Subhashini started her recital with a Ganesha stuti. In the following krithi "Mahadeva" in Revathi raga addressed to the Lord Shiva, she etched the various forms and attributes of Shiva through her communicative abhinaya.

per se who is always trying to ward off insecurities most often imagined than in reality. This sequence was an excerpt from STEMs earlier work "Crows, Caws & Facades". Music by Praveen Rao, talented Tabla player and composer was good.

The performers for this evenings presentation were M.B.Nagaraj, Madhu, M.Nataraj, Chitra Srisailan, Brinda Jacob, Satish B.G, Jagdish Holfa, Pavithra Gowda, Harish and Madhavi Menon.



Subhashini

Subhashini, though on a couple of occasions, seemed to be fatigued, struck a fine form in the delineation of a varna in Nattakuranji raga. The theme of eulogising Lord Srinivasa was artistically and aesthetically elaborated. The interspersing nritya and nritya brought out the inherent talents of the dancer. Subhashini was rhythm perfect. Some of the intricate jatis of the Varna were translated into dance with ease.

ENJOYABLE VOCAL RECITAL

C. Saroja and C. Lalitha, popularly known as Bombay Sisters ragaled the audience at the Adarsha Institute in R.T. Nagar with their scholarly vocal duet. Their programme was held on the

concluding day of a two-day musical festival of R.T.Nagar Cultural Association's anniversary celebrations.

With young H.N.Bhaskar (violin), C. Cheluvaraju (mridanga) and H. Shivaramakrishnan (ghata) providing them a competent instrumental support, the sisters created many an enjoyable moment.

The Bombay Sisters came out in flying colours in detailing Simhendramadhyama for that popular krithi "Ninne nammitinayya". The sahitya and swaravistara at "Pannagendra Shayana" was rounded off with a well laid out swaravinyasa.

The uncomfortable moments in the taarasthayi did not deter the flow of music. Those areas were cleverly avoided and the raga, tana and pallavi in Shankarabharana vouched for their talent and expertise.

OUTSTANDING SINGER

Vijayanagara Sangeetha Sabha presented B.R.Geetha, a gifted vocalist in its mothly concert series at Udaya Educational Trust auditorium. Geetha, a staff artiste of Akashwani, is well versed in Carnatic, Hindusthani and light music. She has developed her own style of singing. The voice culture that she could accomplish, has been of immense utility. She sang with a sincerity of purpose. Her systematic renditions registered well with the audience.

Accompanied by S. Seshagiri Rao (violin), C. Cheluvaraj (mridanga) and M.A. Krishnamurthy (ghata), Geetha was in her top form. Shankarabharana Varna (Saami ninne kori) selected by her was a familiar one, but the manner in which she sang it, was of great interest. She converted the gati into trishra, chaturashra and so on. She handled this demanding exercise most capably. Even the ettukadai swaras too, were in the above fashion.

After a brilliant and scholarly varna, she sang "Panchamatanga" in Malahari raga. The sarvalaghu patterned swaras flowed like a cascade. "Marugelara O Raghava" in Jayanthasri raga was a fitting gap filler.

Geetha's voice culture and sound knowledge of the niceties of Carnatic music got fully exposed in the detailed exposition of Bahudari. The atitara sthayi sancharas never sounded artificial. Rarely heard "Mmaarkoti Sundaram" was neatly presented and crowned with a systematic swaraprastara. The detailed delineation of Keeravani for "Kaligiyunte" was another highlight of her recital.

---A. P. R.

MYSORE MUSINGS

By K. RAMAMURTHY RAO

'Nrithyaloka' an illustrated reference work in Kannada on Indian dances especially

Bharathanatya authored by Natyacharya K. Muralidhara Rao (1924) the doyen of the

Pandanallur school and published by Athri book centre Mangalore was

released by R. Guru an industrialist at Jaganmohana palace with K. V. Murthy President of the Natyacharya Muralidhara Rao Sanmana Samithi in the Chair.

The Natyacharya was honoured with a cheque for Rs. 1 Lakh as purse and Rs. 50,000 as royalty on the book. The brief felicitation function was followed by the Natyacharya's disciple Madikeri's Srividya Raman's Bharatanatya recital. The function was jointly arranged by Muralidhara Rao Sanman Samithi and Bharatheeya Nrithya Kala Parishat (R.), Mysore.



(L to R) K. V. Murthy, R. Guru, K. Muralidhara Rao, G. T. Narayana Rao and K. Ramamurthy Rao are seen

CASSETTE REVIEW



SWARNA BHARATHI; Choral rendering of patriotic songs in Sanskrit. Composer: Mayuram Viswanatha sastry. Ganasudha:

Produced by Percussive Arts Centre, 2nd block, jayanagar, Bangalore-11. Singers S.Shankar, P.Shashidhar, Ajai, C.R.Amarnath, Swarna Shankar, V.Kalavathi, N.R.. Sharada and lakshmi Subramanya.

Side A : Introduction, Jayathi Jayathi, Jaya Jaya Bharatha, Bharatha Janani and Ranjitha Bhuvanam. Side B: Veeradhwajam, Shantha Ahimsa, Saamanava Hitha and Mangalam.

Mayuram Vishwanatha Sastry(1883-1958) was an outstanding vaggeyakara. He was a great Sanskrit scholar and playwright. His patriotic songs are inspiring. His select eight songs are rendered in a group comprising seasoned singers. S.Shankar and T.Srinivas have done well in adapting them in ragas like Khamach, Behag, Shankarabharana, Kapi, Sindhubhairavi, Kuntalavarali and others. The use of flute as a prominent background instrument has been appropriate. The singers have sang in unison and they have done justice to the sahitya and raga of the concerned song.

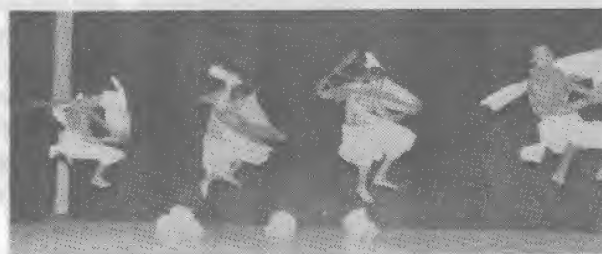


Percussionists K. N. Krishna Murthy, T. S. Chandra Shekar and A. K. Palanivel Honoured by Percussive Art Centre

?uiz of Fine Arts.....1

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Give the date of birth of Thyagaraja. | 5. ———of Hindusthani music corresponds to the Melakarta of Karnatik music. | highlight of any Bharatanatya recital. |
| 2. Give the date of death of Thyagaraja. | 6. Name the artist who won the Bharatarathna award last year | 9. Name the Trinity of Karnatik music. |
| 3. Name the five ghana ragas. | 7. Mention the varieties of abhinaya. | 10. What is the pen-name of Purandaradasa? |
| 4. What is an alarippu? | 8. ———will be the | (Solutions in the next issue) |

Give the name of the dance-form shown in the photo:



(Solution in the next issue)

Calender of events.....

Malleswaram Sangeetha Sabha presents a vocal recital by Trichur V. Ramachandran with Dr. Mysore M. Manjunath (Violin). Guruvayur Dorai (mridanga), K.N. Krishnamurthy (ghata) and Bellary M. Gururaj (morsing) as accompanists at Gokhale Institute Hall, Malleswaram at 4.15 p.m. on 21-6-1998.

Sumitra Nitin accompanied by N.N.Ganeshkumar (violin), Anur Dattatreya Sharma (mridanga) and S. Prashanth (Khanjira) sings for Percussive Arts Centre at 5 p.m. on 21-6-1998 at Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, N.R.Colony.

Under the joint auspices of PAC and Devagiri Sangeetha Sabha Usha Char sings at the Sabha auditorium on July 7, 1998.

Five day "Mysore Musicians Music festival" will be held featuring artistes from Mysore, T.R. Srinath (flute), S. Rajalakshmi (veena), Dr. R.N.Srilata (vocal), G.S. Kamala and G.S. Rajalakshmi (vocal duet) and Mysore M.Nagaraj and Dr. Mysore M. Manjunath (violin duet) under the auspices of Sri Devagiri Sangeetha Sabha from June 24 to 28 daily at 6 p.m. Rendering of a specified pallavi will be the highlight of each of the concert.

A vocal jugalbandhi recital by N. Ananthapadmanabha Rao and Vageesh Bhat accompanied by Ganeshkumar (violin), Dhruvaraj (mridanga). Umakanth Puranik (harmonium) and Srinath Bhat (tabla) on 27-6-98 at 6.30 p.m. and a Bharatanatya recital by Archana Bhargavi on 28-6-1998 at 6.30 p.m. will be held at Udaya Vidya Samsthe, Vijayanagar under the aegis of Vijayanagara Sangeetha Sabha Trust.

Veena maestro R.K. Suryanarayana will be felicitated on June 20 at 6 p.m. at chowdaiah Memorial Hall.

AT Mysore:

Bharatiya Nrithya Kala Parishath presents Madhura Srinath in a Bharatanatya recital on June 18, at 6.30 p.m. at Veene Seshanna Bhavana, Mysore.

With Best Wishes



ABHINAVA ARTS CENTRE (R)

A training and performing centre for Kathak and Bharathanatyam

No. 66, Jain temple street, V. V. Puram, Bangalore - 560 004

Fax/Tel - 6614199, 66134407, 626072

With best compliments from :



SREE RANGA PRINTERS AND BINDERS

No. 242, 7th Cross, 10th Main,
Sri Ramanjaneya Road, Hanumanthanagar,
Bangalore - 560 019 Phone : 6679333

*Printed and Published by Editor General Dr. M. Surya Prasad.
Printed by Balakrishna at Sri Ranga Printers and Binders, Hanumanthanagar, Bangalore*